

Wm T. Davis

HISTORIC RICHMOND

A GUIDE TO THE LANDMARKS

Edited by

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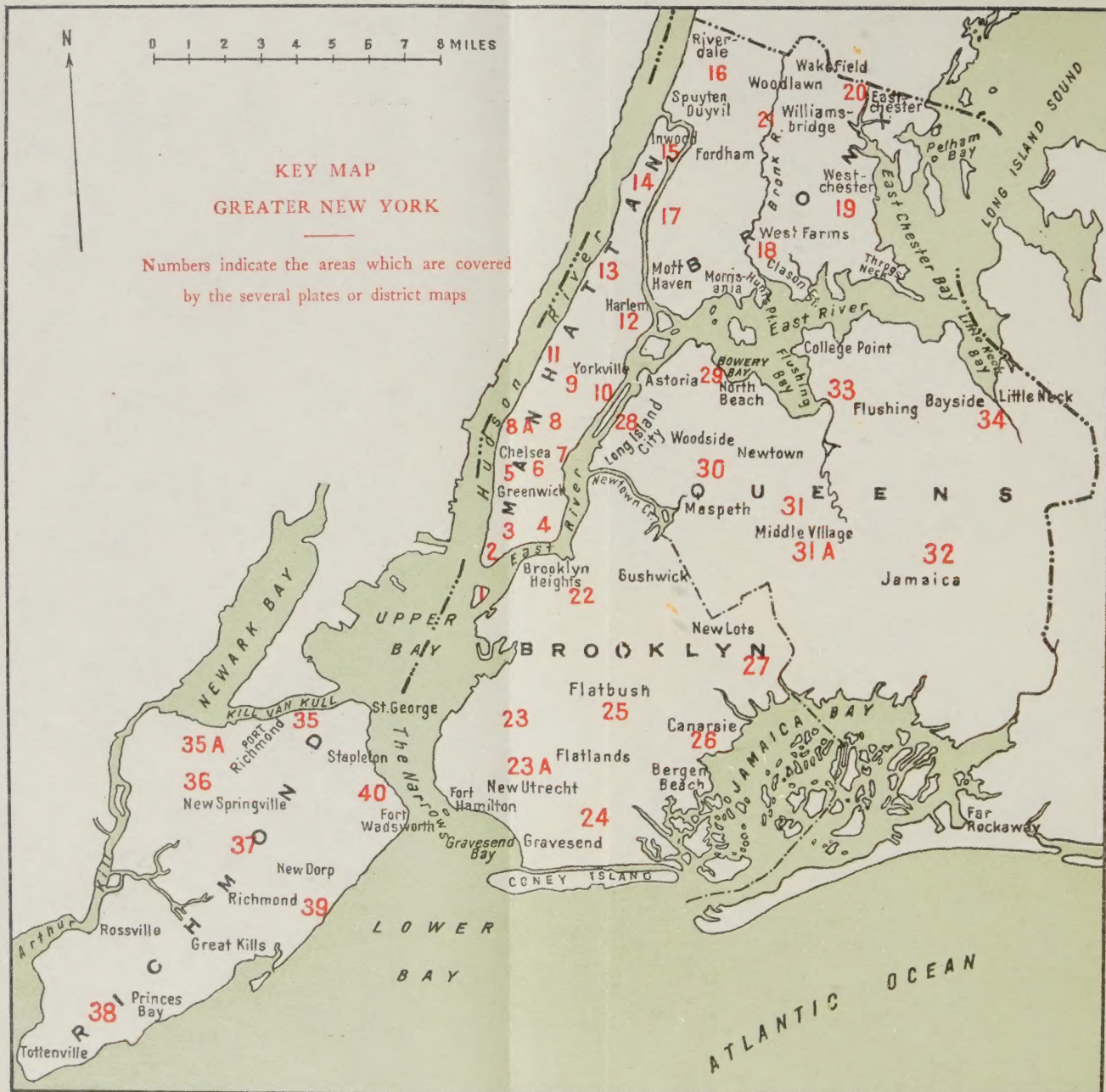


Published by the

CITY HISTORY CLUB

1924

PRICE 25 CENTS



PART FIVE

BOROUGH OF RICHMOND

SEE PLS. 35-40

(In this borough the visiting motorist starts from St. George and is directed along Richmond Terrace through Port Richmond, then south through New Springville, Richmond, Green Ridge, and Rossville, to Tottenville; then north through Great Kills, New Dorp, and Stapleton, back again to St. George, a ride of perhaps 25 miles, with excellent roads generally. Nearly all the places may be reached by railroad or the trackless trolley.)

Previous to the coming of the white man the island was occupied by the Hackensack and Raritan Indians; traces of the aborigines appear in shell heaps in various places. One of the Indian names for the island means "the place of the high sandy banks."

It was Henry Hudson who gave to the place the name *Staaten Eylandt* (Island of the States) as a memorial to the States-General of the Netherlands.

The Indians sold the island more than once. The first purchaser, July 12, 1630, was Director-General Minuit, who gave for it "some duffels, kettles, axes, hoes, wampum, drilling awles, Jews' harps and divers small wares." David Pietersen deVries started a settlement in 1638, but lost his interest in the same. The first active colonizer was Cornelis Melyn who received the land as a patroonship in 1640. During the Indian troubles of 1655 the savages "wreaked their vengeance on Melyn's colonists, ruined its bouweries and murdered twenty-three of their ninety inhabitants."

The Labadist travelers, in their journal of 1679, state:

"There are now about one hundred families on the island, of which the English constitute the least portion, and the Dutch and French divide between them about equally the greater portion. They have neither church nor minister and live far from each other and inconveniently to meet together." They speak of "Oude Dorp" (Old Town) as consisting of "seven houses, but only three in which anybody lived."

The island might well have been a part of New Jersey but the English proprietor, the Duke of York, decided that "all islands in the harbor that could be circumnavigated in twenty-four hours should belong to New York." Sailing around Staten Island in that amount of time was a feat not easy of accomplishment in the 17th century, but Capt. Christopher Billopp did it and the island was adjudged to New York. The captain's reward was a grant of 1163 acres in the southern part of the island which he named for his vessel "Bentley Manor"; his manor house still stands (see p. 235). The island was made into Richmond County in 1683. Cucklestowne, now Richmond, was made the county seat in 1729. Gen. Howe landed here with his British army for his invasion of New York in the summer of 1776; his troops were transported to Gravesend Bay, on Aug. 22, and encountered the patriots in the Battle of Long Island five days later. The island continued in the possession of the British during the remainder of the war. They erected forts at various places. At times the Americans attempted to oust the British and on their part the British made numerous excursions from the island into the neighboring country. When slavery was abolished in the state by the act of the legislature, July 4, 1825, the freed negroes of New Jersey, Staten Island, and Long Island held a joint celebration here. The island was annexed to Greater New York in 1898 as the Borough of Richmond.

From Manhattan the island is reached by the Staten

Island Municipal Ferry from South Ferry. From Brooklyn it is reached by ferry from Bay Ridge.



PLATE 35. ST. GEORGE AND VICINITY

1—Borough Hall. 2—Public Museum. 3—Ft. Knyphausen. 4—Site Castleton Hotel. 5—Site Pavilion Hotel. 6—Site Hessian Camp. 7—Site Cement House. 8—Neville House. 9—Randall Statue. 11—George Wm. Curtis Home. 12—DeGroot-Pelton House. 13—Swan Hotel. 14—Church of the Ascension. 15—Site Dongan House. 16—DeGroot House. 17—Edwards-Michell House. 18—Tyler House. 19—Corsen House. 21—Erastus Brooks House.

ST. GEORGE

From the ferry terminal at St. George, (1) **Borough Hall** is easily reached by crossing the bridge. Go along Richmond Terrace to Wall St. and see, on the left, the public (2) **Museum of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences**. Among other relics exhibited here is the only mile stone known to exist on the island. It formerly

stood at Signs Road and Richmond Turnpike (opened in 1816) on the post route between New York and Philadelphia. There is also exhibited the remarkable stone head found near Fingerboard Road believed to have been made by the Indians. The exhibit also contains an interesting collection of natural history objects, Staten Island photographs, maps, documents and a library of local historic interest.

On Fort Hill, at the head of Fort Place, the earthworks are still to be seen of (3) **Ft. Knyphausen**, one of the several forts built by the British on the island. American soldiers appeared before the fort at one time during a raid, but the snow was waist deep (one of the great snow storms of history) and they did not attempt an attack. Opposite the Curtis High School, at Nicholas St. and St. Mark's Place, stand the Castleton Apartments, which preserve the name of the former (4) **Castleton Hotel** that stood on the same site and was destroyed by fire, Nov., 1907. An earlier name was St. Mark's Hotel, which was an addition to the old Marble House built in 1821 as a dwelling by Gilbert Thompson, son-in-law of Gov. Tompkins. The house was at one time occupied by August Belmont. Walk down Nicholas St. to and along the Terrace and note, on the left just before reaching Westervelt Ave., the site of the (5) **Pavilion Hotel**. Constructed in 1828, this was for a long time one of the most fashionable hotels in the land, particularly a headquarters for Southerners. During the Civil War many of the Confederate officers sent their women folk here while they remained at home to fight the "damned Yankees." Continuing along the Terrace a depression is noticeable at Jersey St. Before the forest was cut away a deep ravine dented the shore here that was frequented by smugglers who infested the coast. During the Revolution a (6) **Hessian Camp** was located here which gave the name "Hessian Springs" to the locality. Gilbert Thompson built

a schooner at this spot in which he conveyed his family to Mexico; the same vessel later brought the Mexican General Santa Anna as a refugee to Staten Island (see below) Farther west, at the easterly corner of Franklin Ave., once stood the first building ever constructed of cement blocks, known as the (7) **Cement House**, or Ward House. A news writer, in 1837, said it was "a sufficient curiosity to start half the world on a pilgrimage to Staten Island." At the corner of Tysen St. is the (8) **Neville House** or "Stone Jug," constructed in 1770 by Capt. John Neville, a retired naval officer; later the building became a hotel.

Sailors Snug Harbor nearby is an institution with an interesting Manhattan background. In 1801 Capt. Robert Richard Randall, whose riches rolled in "by honest privateering," demised his Manhattan farm, at the suggestion of Alexander Hamilton, for the benefit of "aged, decrepit and worn out sailors." This farm occupied land now bounded by Broadway, 10th St., Fourth Ave. and Waverly Pl., and was yielding sufficient income, by 1831, to warrant the purchase of this property on Staten Island. The annual income from the rents of the Manhattan property now yield half a million or more a year, enough to provide handsomely for these aged veterans. Capt. Randall's grave is near the main entrance of the grounds, surmounted by a bronze (9) statue by St. Gaudens.

Proceed south on Bard Ave. to No. 234; here (11) George William Curtis lived and wrote "Prue and I" and other works. During the draft riots of July, 1863, Horace Greeley and Wendell Phillips were brought to this house and concealed. Return to the Terrace and continue west to "the Cove" (at Pelton Ave.) where stands the (12) ***DeGroot-Pelton House**. The stone portion of the house dates from 1730; the central portion, stone covered with wood, is of Revolutionary days; the brick portion was constructed in 1832. DeGroot was the occupant during the Revolution, and Major Andre was billeted here for a

time. It was at "the Cove," according to tradition, that a small boat from Hudson's Half Moon on an exploring expedition was attacked by the Indians on the shore and an English sailor named Coleman killed. Continue along the Terrace to the (13) **Swan Hotel**, a shingle-sided building; this was once the political center of Staten Island and it was here, in 1825, that the emancipated slaves held their celebration (see above).

The (14) **Church of the Ascension**, at 1626 Richmond Terrace, stands on the site of an Indian village, as proven by the skeletons, shells, and implements that have been found here. The British built a redoubt here which was captured by the Americans in 1777. A little farther along on the Terrace, between Dongan and Bodine Sts., used to stand the (15) **Dongan House**. The records of land grants make it clear that Thomas Dongan, the famous English governor of New York, erected here in 1687 the "lordship and manor of Casseltowne," named after his English manor. Castleton Corners, Dongan Hills, as well as Dongan St., are reminders of the governor's possessions here. At one place in the city records the governor is spoken of as being absent "at his hunting lodge on Staten Island, killing bears." The manor house was occupied during the Revolution by John Bodine and remained standing until 1878. Indian remains have been found nearby in the sand bank, and at the foot of the embankment was a famous spring, a meeting place for Indian harvest festivals and treaty making. Farther west at the corner of Clove Road, is the (16) **DeGroot House**, dating from about 1810. It was the home of Alfred DeGroot, well known for his acquaintance with historic Staten Island and for his charity work. Turn south on Clove Road and see, near the s.w. corner of Manor Road, the (17) **Edwards-Michell House**. Judge Edwards of the Supreme Court Bench, grandson of Jonathan Edwards and a cousin of Aaron Burr, once lived here. This was originally known as the

Dongan Lodge House. Follow Clove Road and see, on the left, the (18) **Tyler House**, once owned by the wife of President Tyler. It was bought in 1878 by Hon. William M. Evarts and occupied later by the Russian Consul-General. Continuing to the Richmond Turnpike, note, on the left, the (19)* **Corsen House**, built about 1690, said to have been used as a slave market. Return to the s.w. corner of Clove Road and Forest Ave. and note the (21) **Erastus Brooks or Dubois House**. Here Gen. Santa Anna (mentioned above) was in hiding during his stay on Staten Island. Certain brother adventurers smuggled him away from here in a piano box which was carted down Richmond Terrace to the Elizabethport ferry and shipped to Delaware. He was caught, however, on the high seas on his way to Vera Cruz.

PORT RICHMOND

Go back to the Terrace and continue west to Port Richmond; note (22) **Danner's Hotel**, the old Port Richmond Hotel. It stands on the site of the brick dwelling of Capt. Isaac Decker which was burned during a Revolutionary raid by Gen. Sullivan. Decker had piloted the British ships from outside Sandy Hook to a safe anchorage off Staten Island; subsequently he joined the British army and commanded a troop of mounted Loyalists. After the Revolution Judge David Mersereau built a dwelling here which, about 1820, was converted into the Port Richmond Hotel. Later names were the Continental Hotel and the St. James Hotel. Here Aaron Burr spent his final days and died Sept. 14, 1836.

Behind the Post Office, on the Terrace just west of Richmond Ave., stood a famous "seminary of learning," commonly known as (23) **Van Pelt's Seminary**. The Rev. Peter J. Van Pelt was pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, beginning in 1802, and he also undertook the management of this school. In 1812 he established a

Sunday School here, perhaps the first such school in the United States. When Lafayette visited New York in 1824, Mr. Van Pelt delivered the address of welcome. The present (24) **Dutch Reformed Church** stands a little farther south on the west side of Richmond Ave.; it dates from



PLATE 35A. PORT RICHMOND AND VICINITY

22—Danner's Hotel. 23—Site Van Pelt's Seminary. 24—Dutch Reformed Church. 25—Lake-Croak House. 26—Post House. 27—De Hart House. 28—Van Pelt-Decker House.

1845, but the church organization existed as early as 1696. The church building of Revolutionary days was destroyed by the British and a new building of brick was started in 1785. See tablet over the front door.

From the western edge of Port Richmond along the Richmond Terrace to about South Ave. still stand many

of the former ***Homes of the Oyster Men**. These men grew rich by reason of the fact that the fresh waters of the Passaic and Hackensack Rivers which mingled here with the salt water of the Bay made an ideal place for "drinking" or fattening the oysters before they were shipped to market. The outward and visible sign of the rich oyster man was a handsome dwelling usually built along colonial lines with tall columns facing the Bay. It is the last sad remains of these that tell the tale of former greatness. The waters are no longer pure and the oyster business has removed elsewhere.

Continue along the Terrace to the (25) **Lake-Croak House** between Lake and Simonson Sts.; the land on which it stands was part of a lot granted by Gov. Andros to John Lee, Dec. 16, 1680. Farther on within the grounds of the Downey Shipbuilding Corporation stands the (26) ***Post House**, dating from 1691. This occupies a part of the De Hart farm which was a favorite camping ground of the Hessians during the Revolution. Major Andre frequented this house and the pleasing impression he made on the inhabitants, in contrast with the rough ways of the Hessians, is a common tradition even today. Next to the car barn, a short distance east of Holland Ave., is the (27) **De Hart House**, which antedates the Revolution; at one time it was used as a school house. The Terrace terminates at Holland Hook; on the heights at the approach to the Elizabethtown ferry once stood two British redoubts.

From Holland Hook take Western Ave. south to Washington Ave., and then go east to the (28) **Van Pelt-Decker House** near the n.w. corner of South Ave. This house dates from before the Revolution; Van Pelt, the occupant at the time of the war, was apparently half-hearted in the patriot cause, so that the American forces on one of their raids forced him out of bed to accompany them into Jersey and to fight with them against the British. Later his wife turned the house into a tavern for the soldiers of both armies.

Continue east on Washington Ave. for about one mile and a half to Richmond Ave., then turn right into Willow Brook Road. Go south to Watchogue Road where, on the n.w. corner, stands the old (30) **Pero-Christopher House**. At the s.w. corner the (31) **Mersereau House** used to stand; Col. Joshua Mersereau lived there during the Revolution. The British had put a price on the colonel's head and a story is told of his hair-breadth escape from them. Go east on Watchogue Road to St. John Ave. to see the (32) **Housman-Ives House**, built about 1735. The Housman family belongs to the early days of the island. Garrett Housman took the Loyalist side during the Revolution. Ives, a comparatively recent occupant, was at one time the bicycle champion of the United States.

Return on Watchogue Road to Willow Brook Road and go south to the Richmond Turnpike where, on the s.e. corner, stands a tablet to mark the crossing of the (33) **Blazed Trail** and Willow Brook Trail in 1793. Continue a short distance south to the bridge over Willow Brook. Among the willows to the left, see the (34) ***Christopher House**, built prior to the Revolution by Nicholas Christopher and owned by his son Joseph during the war. Here the Committee of Safety met; it was reached by secret paths through swamps. Return to Richmond Turnpike and go west to Richmond Ave. or Old Stone Road; here on the s.e. corner once stood (35) **Bulls Head Tavern**, built in 1741. The tavern was a Tory headquarters during the Revolution and the scene of many outrages; it remained in existence until 1890.

NEW SPRINGVILLE

Turn south on Richmond Ave. to New Springville, formerly Karles Neck, one of the earliest settlements on the island. Beyond Rockland Ave., on the left, a brick building stands on the site of the (36) **Simonson House**, which was built about 1690 by William, the son of Simon La

Blant, a Huguenot refugee who took the name of Simonson on his arrival here. A little farther on are the blackened ruins of (37) **Blake-Miller House**, which dates from the 17th century. On the north side of Travers Ave. is the (38) **Crocheron House**. John Crocheron was a promi-

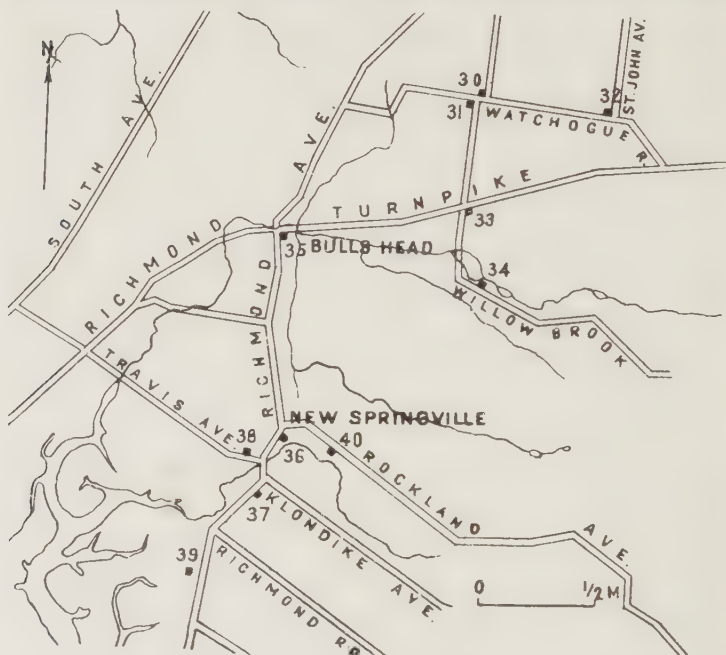


PLATE 36. NEW SPRINGVILLE

30—Pero-Christopher House. 31—Site Mersereau House. 32—Housman-Ives House. 33—Tablet, Blazed Trail. 34—Christopher House. 35—Site Bulls Head Tavern. 36—Site Simonson House. 37—Blake-Miller House. 38—Crocheron House. 39—Barne-Tysen House. 40—Jones House.

nent Huguenot who escaped execution in France by concealing himself in a hogshead on board a vessel coming to America. The foundations of the older homestead in which he probably lived appear a little to the east. Go

south on Richmond Ave. about half a mile and see, off the road to the west, the little (39) **Barne Tysen House**, dating from the 17th century; Barne Tysen received a grant of land here from Andros in 1677. Return to Rockland Ave. and go east about one-quarter mile to the (40) **Jones House**. It stands on the south side of the street and antedates the Revolution. Although Jones took the loyalist side, a troop of Hessians, encamped nearby, often held high revel in the house and kept Mrs. Jones and the children in abject terror.

RICHMOND

Continue on Rockland Ave. and turn south on Richmond Rd. into wonderfully historic Richmond, formerly Cuckoldstowne or Cucklestowne, once the county seat. During the Revolution Richmond was a place of encampment of the 17th British Dragoons; this was the only regular cavalry the British had in their army and served as Gen. Clinton's body guard.

Entering the village by the Richmond Road the first point of interest is the (42) **Third County Court House**, recently abandoned on the removal of the county seat to St. George. This stands on Center St. at the head of Court Pl., and is easily seen from the Richmond Road. The **Second County Court House**, occupied by the Board of Supervisors for the first time in 1794, still stands on the west side of Arthur Kill Road, diagonally opposite the s.e. corner of Richmond and Arthur Kill Roads. This corner is now occupied by (44) **St. Andrew's Parish House**, and is the site of the first county court house, which was burned by the British during the Revolution. On the opposite corner of the Richmond and Arthur Kill Roads formerly stood the (45) **Jail**, erected when Richmond became a county seat in 1729. The s.w. corner of Court Pl. and Richmond Road, now known as the (46) **Barton House**, is the former site of the old Cuckoldstowne Inn. This was

the Revolutionary headquarters of Gen. Cleveland, chief engineer of the British Army. Here, it is stated, Major Andre wrote his will. On the s.e. corner of Center St. and Arthur Kill Road, is the site of the old (47) **Dutch Reformed Church**, burned by the British during the Revolution, because it was a "rebel church."

At the junction of the Arthur Kill, Richmond Hill, and Old Mill Roads, stands (48)* **St. Andrew's Church**, estab-

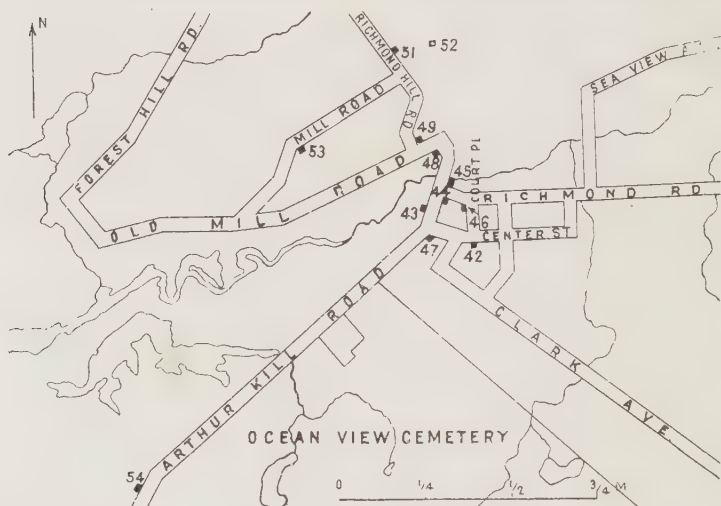


PLATE 37. RICHMOND

42—Third County Court House. 43—Second County Court House. 44—St. Andrew's Parish House. 45—Site Jail. 46—Barton House. 47—Site Dutch Reformed Church. 48—St. Andrew's Church. 49—Site Whipping Post and Gallows. 51—Latourette House. 52—Latourette Farmhouse. 53—Site Holmes Farmhouse.

lished by Queen Anne. The original building was constructed, 1709-11. During the Revolution, it was occupied by the British as a hospital. It was also used by them as a fort, which was attacked and captured by the Americans in one of their raids from the mainland. The building was

left in ruins by the British. It was rebuilt but destroyed by fire during the first half of the 19th century, and again rebuilt. The only part of the original building now standing is a portion of the end wall nearest the road. Note three tablets, unveiled in 1908—one to the memory of Queen Anne, the second for the first rector, and the third for the fourteen rectors who served the church during its first two hundred years. The church still has, almost complete, the silver service donated by Queen Anne; this is now kept in storage in New York for safety's sake.

At the foot of the hill, across the Old Mill Road, where the schoolhouse now stands, formerly stood the (49) **Whipping Post and Gallows**. Proceed up the Richmond Hill Road. On the right, see the (51) brick house erected by the Latourette family about 1830. In front and along the fence at the left, stands what were formerly the old (52) **Latourette Farmhouse and Slave Quarters**. The Latourette family is mentioned in records as early as 1726. Follow the lane (Mill Rd.) opposite the Latourette place; in the first bend, on the left, lie the foundation stones of the very old (53) **Holmes Farmhouse**, used by the British during the Revolution as a minor headquarters. In this, legend has it, the raid on Springfield, N. J., was planned. On the brow of a steep hill, to the southwest and overlooking the Fresh Kills, stood, until very recently, the remains of a British redoubt. A systematic search here in recent years has resulted in the finding of a number of interesting Revolutionary relics.

Return to Arthur Kill Road, formerly Fresh Kills Road; go south to Gifford's Lane. At this point, on the right, stands an old house (the first one in the group), the last (54) **Home of Henry Boehm**, a noted schoolmaster of many years ago. During repairs lately made, a secret chamber was discovered on second floor, south end, built in as part of the chimney; this is some five feet deep and abundantly large enough to conceal a human being. The chamber was empty when the discovery was made.

Continue on the Arthur Kill Road through Green Ridge. On the right, after crossing a creek, note the picturesque vine-clad walls of the (55) **Benham Mansion**, ruined by fire in 1897; the house was built prior to the Mexican War



PLATE 38. TOTTEVILLE AND VICINITY

54—Henry Boehm House. 55—Benham Mansion. 56—Disosway House. 57—Billopp House. 58—Ruins of fort. 59—Purdy's Hotel. 61—Woods of Arden House. 62—Erastus Wyman House. 63—Sequine Britton House.

by Lieut. (later Commander) J. G. Benham. This locality was the scene of conflicts during the Revolution, a camp of dragoons and a British fort being located here. Proceed to Rossville; a very early name for this place was

oking Point"; prior to the Revolution it was known Blazing Star." An old stone house stood, until 1850, the farm of Samuel W. Benedict near Rossville; this narrow slits for windows, constructed as for defence. continue through Kreisherville toward Tottenville. Just before reaching Mill Creek the old stone (56) **Disosway** **se** may be seen on the right about 200 yards from the water at the water's edge; the name is mentioned in the county records as early as 1687. The Disosways were among the few patriot families on the island during the Revolution; tradition has it that during this war the head of the family was taken captive by the British who offered his wife her husband's freedom if she would persuade her husband, who was also active in the American ranks, to surrender to the British, or at least to cease his activity. She refused the offer indignantly. A mill which stood in the early days on Mill Creek belonged to the family.

TOTTENVILLE

This village is a part of the original Manor of Bentley which was granted to Capt. Christopher Billopp (see page 21). (57) *The **Billopp House**, Tottenville's historic house, is on the southern shore of the island (go through the village to Bentley Ave., turn up to Amboy Road and then on latter to a lane). The house dates from 1688 and was constructed by the old captain himself. His grandson, Christopher, remained loyal to the British cause in the Revolution and was carried off for ransom by some Rangers and kept until exchanged. A second time he was made captive and again given up by Washington, at Howe's request. In this house after the battle of Long Island the interview took place between Gen. Howe and the American committee, composed of Adams, Franklin and Rutledge, without any agreement being reached. Sir Henry Clinton, John Robertson, Gen. Knyphausen and Major Andre were captured here. All the windows in the house were shat-

tered by the terrible explosion of munitions near Morgans, N. J., in 1917. Probably no landmark in the city, at this writing, is so worthy of the attention of public spirited citizens.

At the extreme southern end of the island some (58) fort ruins are visible; they are a reminder that the war department constructed a defense here during the Spanish-Ameri-



BILLOPP HOUSE, TOTTEVILLE, STATEN ISLAND

can War. Follow the Amboy Road out of Tottenville for about three miles to Princes Bay Ave. Follow this avenue down to the shore to see (59) **Purdy's Hotel**, a building nearly two hundred years old and well preserved. The point of land, a little to the south, is Seguine's Point which was the scene of an uprising of the people, in 1859, who feared the spread of disease among them because of

the establishment of a quarantine station here. The buildings were burned to the ground by the angry multitude. Return to the Amboy Road and proceed northward for about two miles to Arden Ave. Take another side trip to the Southfield (Hylan) Boulevard to see the (61)* **Woods of Arden House**, formerly known as the house of "Devil" John Pollion.



BRITTON-CUBBERLY HOUSE, NEW DORP

GREAT KILLS

Go north on Southfield (Hylan) Boulevard to Great Kills. On the left near Hillside Ave., see the (62) **Erastus Wyman House**. This was formerly known as the Major James Guyon House and is said to be very old. On the right, at Cleveland Ave. and the shore, see the (63) **Seguine-Britton House**, of stone, the former home of "Schooner"

John Pollion. Continue on the Boulevard to Guyon Ave., and turn east to see (64)* **Guyon-Clark House**. Proceed to Mill Road and turn north at Tysen Lane; see on left (65)* **Lake-Tysen House**. Continue north to New Dorp Lane. Go east on this lane (which was formerly a straight race course for horses) almost to the beach where is seen, on the right, the (66)* **Britton-Cubberly House**. This house has been presented by Dr. and Mrs. Nathaniel L. Britton to the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences for preservation. It is furnished to correspond with the colonial period in which it was built. See the quaint old kitchen. Returning see, on the north side of the lane, the (67) **Vanderbilt House** with two gables. This was part of the Vanderbilt estate (now used as a United States Government aviation field) which was given to William H. Vanderbilt by his father, the young man having been sent here to recover his health. The house was moved to this position from a point nearer the lane and has been much modernized. Continue west across the Boulevard almost to the railroad track and see, on the right, the (68) **Parker Clausen House**, about 120 years old and containing an interesting old fireplace. There stood nearly opposite until recently the (69) **Jacobsen-Vanderbilt House**, built prior to the Revolution by Christian Jacobsen who was shot by British soldiers entering the house during the war. The house became later the property of Vanderbilt. Continue on the lane to Richmond Road and turn south.

NEW DORP

New Dorp, including Elm Tree Beacon (near which the first Huguenots landed in 1658), now embraces also Stony Brook. Here Gen. Monckton rested with his army several weeks after the French and Indian War, during which time Sir Jeffrey Amherst was invested with the Order of the Bath, Oct. 25, 1761. Prior to the location of the county seat at Richmond, court was held at Stony

Brook from 1680 to 1729, and the "court house" here is mentioned in the records under date of 1723. The old Britton House, which was built between 1650 and 1660 and, therefore, antedated the Billopp House, stood until 1896 on the west side of Amboy Road, just about opposite Tysens Lane. A little north from here, on the left, where Amboy



PLATE 39. NEW DORP

64—Guyon-Clark House. 65—Lake-Tysen House. 66—Britton-Cubberly House. 67—Vanderbilt House. 68—Parker Clausen House. 69—Site Jacobsen-Vanderbilt House. 71—Black Horse Tavern. 72—Fountain House. 73—Cortelyou-Taylor-Tysen House. 74—Moravian Church.

Road meets Richmond Road, is the (71) **Black Horse Tavern**. This was erected in 1754 and known prior to the Revolution as "Wayside Rest." Near here a British officer was thrown from his black horse and killed, hence the name. Camp Hill, situated immediately back and west of this tavern, was a British gambling resort and dueling

ground; many British officers during their stay on the island were court-martialed for these vices. On the north side of Richmond Road, nearly opposite, is the remodeled (72) **Fountain House**. The unfortunate Lieut. Sidney A. Simons, U. S. N., who was drowned off Cape Hatteras, was born in this house.

Proceed north a short distance on Richmond Road. On the right, nearly opposite the entrance to the Moravian cemetery is one of the oldest houses on Staten Island in a good state of preservation, the (73)* **Cortelyou-Taylor-Tysen House**. A negro who burglarized this house suffered the first legal execution in the history of the county. See on the left the Moravian Church and cemetery. About 1742 the Moravians established a "preaching station" on Staten Island. They purchased this property in 1763, and erected a (74)* combined church and parsonage building, which is still standing but removed to a position behind the present church edifice (dedicated in 1845). The cemetery antedates the coming of the Moravians, some grave stones bearing dates prior to 1742. A considerable part of the cemetery grounds was a gift of William H. Vanderbilt who erected, about 1888, the Vanderbilt Mausoleum on the eminence at the rear of the cemetery from which spot the view is impressive. Proceed north via Richmond Road to Dongan Hills and see on the right the (75)* **Perrine House**, a very old structure, built about 1680 by Capt. William Stillwell. It came into the Perrine family by marriage in 1764. During the Revolution it was a headquarters for British officers, two of whom fought in the woods opposite a duel over a maiden. "The highest land on the Atlantic coast between Maine and Florida" is a point 413 ft. above the water, inland from the Perrine House. A ravine penetrating the hill has been called the "Valley of the Iron Hill" and at other times "Mersereau Valley" (one Mersereau is said to have rescued his sweetheart here from a British officer).

Still farther on beyond Fingerboard Rd., on the left, is the (76) **Clinch Homestead** (No. 955 Richmond Road). This dates from 1780; its builder was Henry Garretson, a noted athlete. A later owner was Charles P. Clinch, Collector of Customs of the Port of New York, whose sister married A. T. Stewart. This general locality goes by the name of Concord and the particular eminence to the north

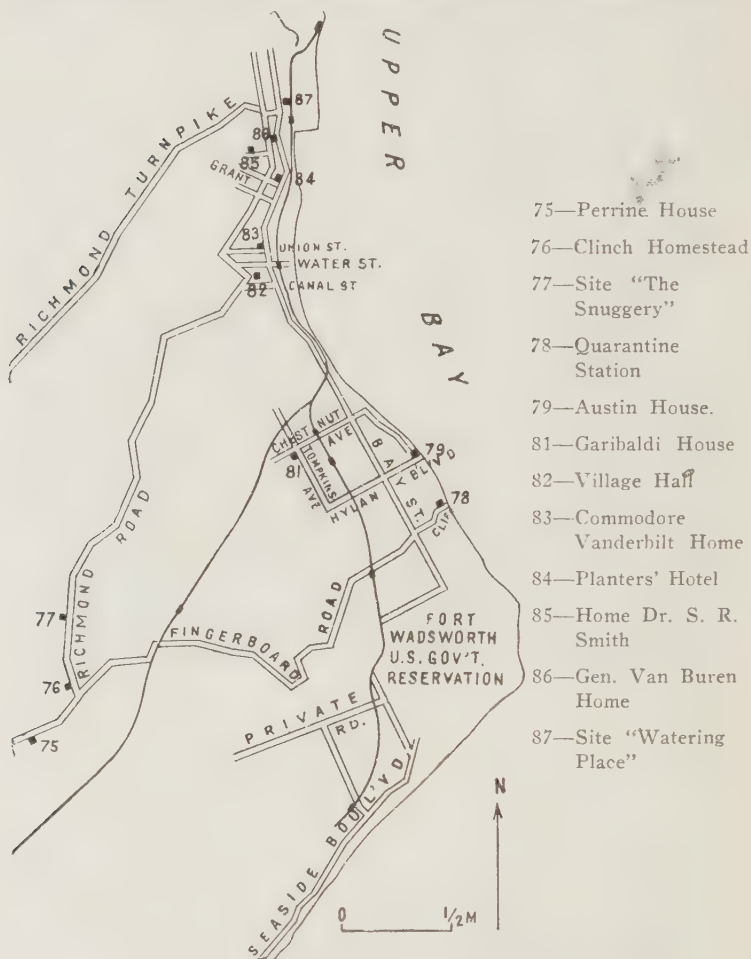


PERRINE HOUSE, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND

of the Clinch homestead is known as Emerson Hill, Judge William Emerson having moved to Staten Island from Concord, Mass. about 1837. His farmhouse (no longer standing) he called (77) "**The Snuggery**" and his brother, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a frequent visitor and wrote some of his poems here. Thoreau also lived here, in 1843, as a tutor in the family.

FORT WADSWORTH

Turn back on Richmond Rd. into Fingerboard Rd. and proceed to Ft. Wadsworth, just south of which is the site of the first Dutch settlement on Staten Island (1641).



- 75—Perrine House
- 76—Clinch Homestead
- 77—Site "The Snuggery"
- 78—Quarantine Station
- 79—Austin House.
- 81—Garibaldi House
- 82—Village Hall
- 83—Commodore Vanderbilt Home
- 84—Planters' Hotel
- 85—Home Dr. S. R. Smith
- 86—Gen. Van Buren Home
- 87—Site "Watering Place"

PLATE 40. FT. WADSWORTH AND STAPLETON

Oude Dorp. The old village received rough treatment from the Indians and we know from the Labadist travelers (see p. 221) that it was sparsely inhabited in 1679, many having removed to "Nieuwe Dorp." Forts Wadsworth and Tompkins were defences built by New York State during the war of 1812. In 1847 the United States Government bought the reservation, demolished the old forts, and built the present works. There was some kind of a defence at this point prior to the Revolution which the English rebuilt in 1776. The last shot of the Revolution was directed at this fort by a British gunboat on Evacuation Day, 1783, because of the open derision expressed by on-looking Staten Islanders.

STAPLETON

Proceed toward Stapleton by Bay St. (formerly New York Ave.). At the foot of Cliff St. is the present (78) **Quarantine Station**. Continue on Bay St. to Pennsylvania Ave. (Hylan Boulevard) at the foot of which stands the well-preserved (79)* **Austin House**, said to have been erected in 1710 by a Dutch merchant; the building contains many Revolutionary relics. Return again to Bay St. and continue as far as Chestnut St. Proceed west and find, at the corner of Tompkins Ave., the (81) **Garibaldi House**; the famous Italian patriot lived here for some time manufacturing tallow candles. The house was presented to the Italian Government by Frederick Bachman and is now protected by a cement superstructure. A little farther north, on the left of Bay St., is the U. S. Marine Hospital. This was originally a state hospital, erected in 1834-35 and known as the Seaman's Retreat. Later the Marine Society of New York purchased the property and rented it to the United States Government in 1883 as a Marine Hospital. Twenty years later the United States purchased it. Water and Canal Sts., a little farther north, bound what was formerly a brook that widened into an inlet

which became a harbor for small boats. This accounts for the present park (one of the very few park areas on Staten Island), at the far end of which still stands the former (82) **Village Hall of Edgewater.**

Go to Union St. where, near the n.w. corner, behind other buildings, is the early (83) **Home of Commodore Vanderbilt**; it is a good example of the old story and a half house of a hundred and fifty years ago. From the shore in front of this house the Commodore conducted the periauger ferry to New York, whereby the foundations of his fortune were laid. Later he erected an impressive new house, a little farther north, which was demolished recently. At Bay and Grant Sts., n.w. corner, stands the (84) **Planters' Hotel**, a famous resort for southerners before the Civil War. The first hill at the left is Ward's Hill, the second is "Pavilion Hill" or "Mt. Tompkins." Two Revolutionary forts stood here, but no remains of them survive. A wonderful view, however, of New York and the upper bay is afforded therefrom.

At 85 Hannah St., two short blocks from Bay St., is the former (85) home of Dr. Samuel R. Smith who took title to this property in 1808; there was then no hospital on the Island and the doctor often brought patients to his home for treatment, rather than attempt to traverse the bad roads to visit them. Finally the doctors on the island under Dr. Smith's lead secured an adjoining building on the east (still standing, No. 73) and the first real hospital of the county was established. The (86) **House of Gen. Van Buren**, now adorned with a modern coat of stucco, may be seen from Bay St. in the rear between Nos. 14-16. Formerly a large spring, known as the (87) **"Watering Place,"** gushed from the foot of the bank, across Bay St. from, and about opposite, the "Staten Islander" office. Here ships filled their casks for the voyage. It is often referred to in early records relating to fleets and ships in the harbor.

